



*The Horse Chestnut Trees (Aesculus Hippocastanum)
North Valley Road, Paoli, Pennsylvania*

The Great Valley Association

Tredyffrin Township

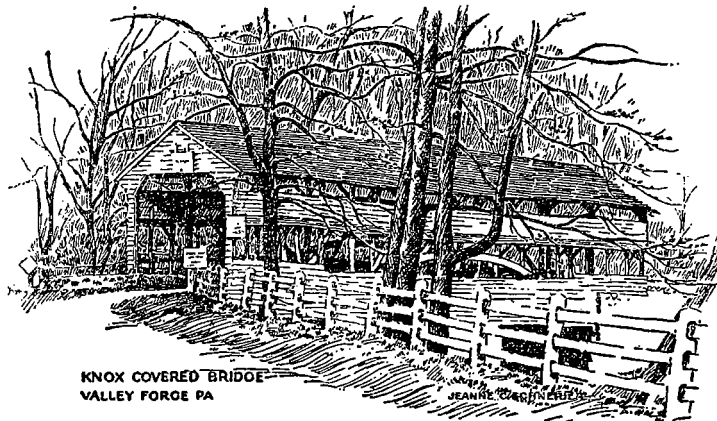
Chester County

Pennsylvania

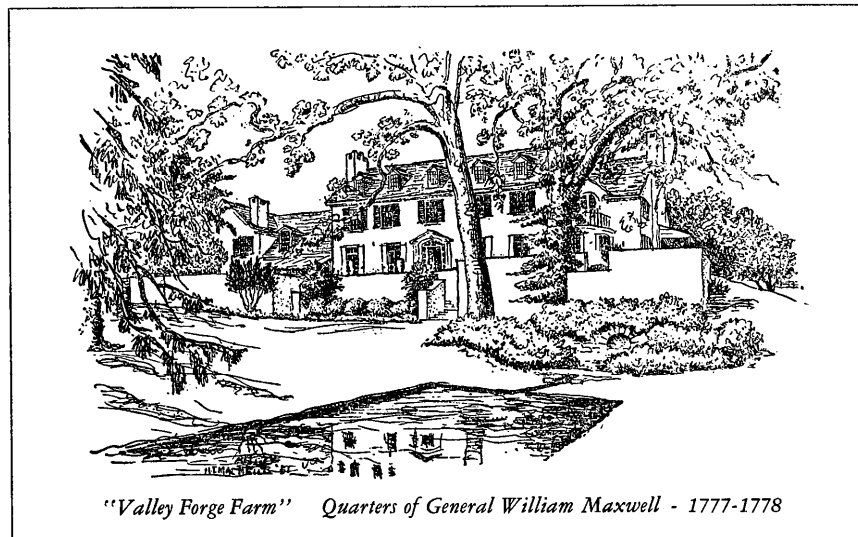
THE GREAT VALLEY ASSOCIATION

The Great Valley is in the eastern part of Chester County and extends from King of Prussia to Downingtown. It is part of the 40,000 acres surveyed by William Penn in 1684 for the early Welsh settlers; and was then known as “The Welsh Tract.” This tract originally included nine townships: Merion, Haverford, Radnor, Tredyffrin, Whiteland, Easttown, Willistown, Goshen and part of Westtown.

Today, the Great Valley Association represents the residents of that part of the Great Valley, which lies in Tredyffrin Township. Tredyffrin Township was organized in 1707. “Tre” or “tref” is Welsh for *town* or *township*. “Dyffrin” means *wide cultivated valley*; hence the compound “Tre Dyffrin” or “Tredyffrin” meaning *township in a wide cultivated valley*. It is also recorded that in 1708, the English referred to this section as *Valleytown* or *Valleyton*.



In the middle of the 18th century, Thomas Pownall, royal governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, made a study of the American colonies for his Majesty, George III. He visited this neighborhood, and in writing from the nearby Warren Tavern, said “Here is a settlement in a great valley. The houses are all busked up (*improved and well cared for*). They appear to belong to landowners and not yet yeomen (*tenants*).”



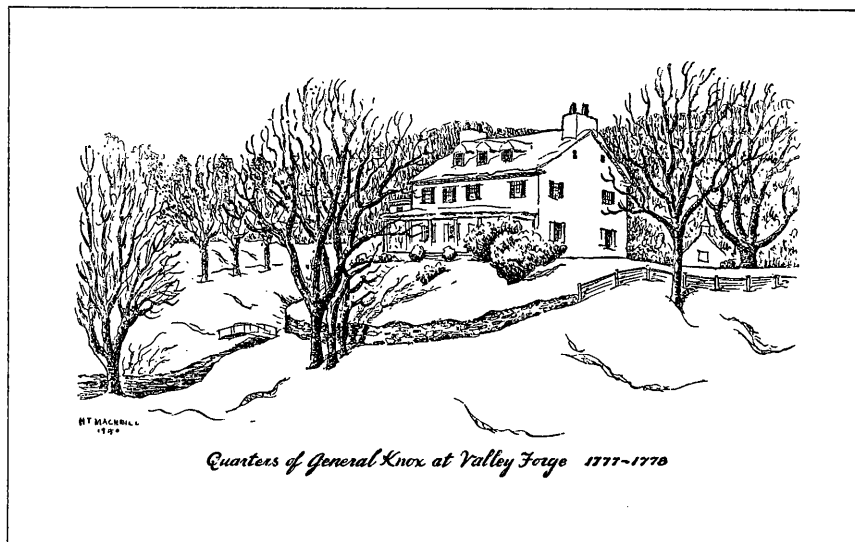
Until approximately 1925, this Valley was exclusively farmland that was rich, fertile and productive. Its landowners prospered, and their properties had a quiet dignity and beauty. Many of the original farmhouses still exist and are occupied today. Among them are dwellings adjacent to Valley Forge, used as living quarters for General Washington's staff during the encampment in 1777 and 1778: Lafayette, Wayne, Woodford, Potter, Poor, Pulaski, DuPortail, DeKalb, Stirling, and Maxwell. Howe and Cornwallis of the British forces were quartered here briefly. These historic homes have been enlarged and adapted to gracious country living and are cherished by their present owners and valued by the Valley Forge National Historical Park.

Over the years, the Great Valley has become less agricultural and almost exclusively residential, and its population has grown rapidly. New residents, who may have been attracted to the Great Valley by the beauty of its rural approach from Paoli station, will be interested to know that this natural beauty was fostered by some far-sighted and generous landowners, who were the founders of the Great Valley Association.

The Beginnings of the GVA...

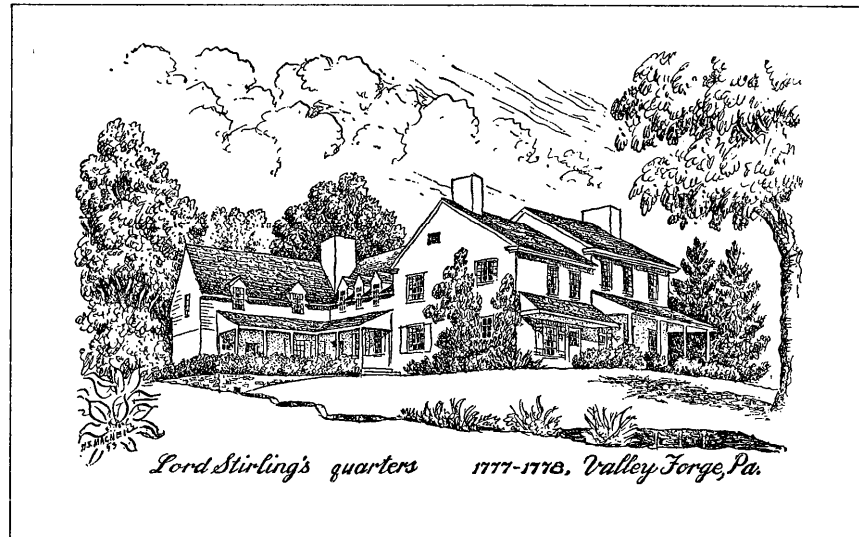
Soon after the turn of the 20th century, C. Colkett Wilson and Richard Haughton, owners of more than 300 acres, planted many beautiful and long lasting buttonwood and maple trees on their own properties along North Valley Road. This planting, which was the start of the North Valley Road preservation, was done for two reasons – to continue the shade from the woods on the north and to hide the two pole lines of the Bell Telephone and the Pure Oil Companies, which were along the road at that time.

In the early summer of 1913, Richard Haughton, then the owner of the Great Valley Mill property, discovered some surveyors staking out lots on the hill coming down North Valley Road from Paoli, just above Miss Lydia M. Robinson’s farm. This property is on the west side of the road, south of the former “Trenton Cut-off” of the Pennsylvania Railroad.



Desiring to preserve the natural, rural quality of the approach to Paoli, Mr. Haughton found the owner of the property being surveyed that same morning, and obtained the option to buy all the woodlands from Miss Robinson’s boundary to the top of the hill. That evening, he called a meeting of the adjacent property holders, who took immediate action and formed a holding company with Mr. Uteley Wedge as president, Miss Lydia M. Robinson as vice-president, Mr. C. Colkett Wilson as secretary, Mr.

Richard Haughton as treasurer, and Mr. George Henderson, Esq. as solicitor. Other members were Mr. William Gretz and Mr. Robert H. Page.



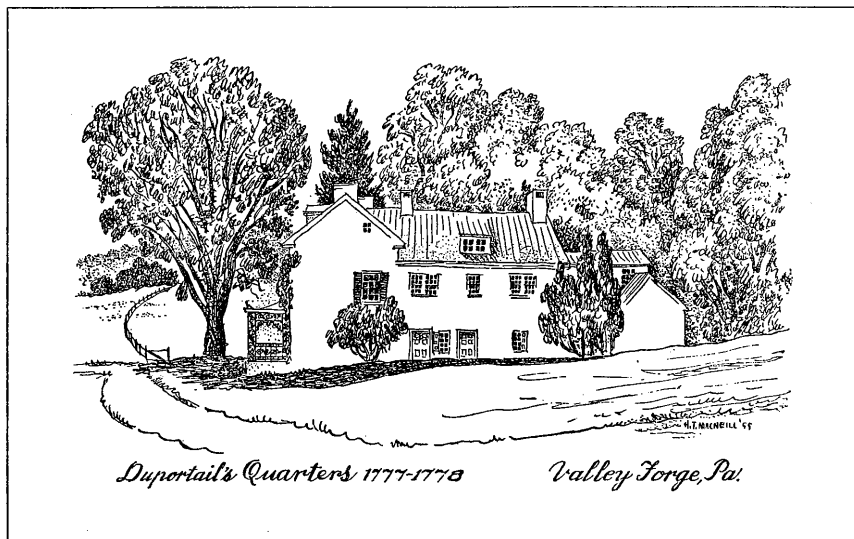
In September 1913, “The Great Bear Tract, Inc.” was formally organized and incorporated to hold title to the property. This name was derived from the nearby road to Paoli, known as Bear Hill Road. The Great Bear Tract, Inc. later acquired additional land on the east side of the road too, all at the private expense of a few public-minded citizens. Thus, the beauty of the approach to Paoli was assured to future residents of the Great Valley.

Four or five years later during World War I, this group was faced with its next crisis, when the American Telephone and Telegraph Company (AT&T) planned to install a long distance line with heavy cables on short, thick poles along North Valley Road. After protesting to the company that this would lead to devastation and deforestation of the roadside, AT&T agreed to put the lines underground if the group would contribute to its cost. They were able to collect \$5,750 from the neighbors, which was a substantial amount of money in those days. AT&T paid the remainder for a total expense of \$27,000 to install an underground conduit, which runs from the top of the hill in Paoli to Diamond Rock Hill.

Ever eager to improve the roadside, the committee then approached the Bell Telephone Company and also persuaded them to go underground with a contribution of \$2,500. The Pure Oil Company then followed, thus eliminating all of the pole lines along North Valley Road.

The next project of the Great Bear Tract group was the planting of 100 horse chestnut trees on both sides of North Valley Road between Swedesford and Yellow Springs Roads, alternating the red and white varieties. Mr. Wedge secured the trees and supervised the planting. Present residents are indebted to him for finding the rare red variety. The Great Bear Tract, Inc. spent nearly \$1,000 for this beautification, which attracts visitors from other areas in the spring.

In 1940, one of the group's founding members, Miss Lydia S. Moncure Robinson donated 63 acres of her property to the Chester County Horticultural Society (now known as the Open Land Conservancy). This land, the Airdrie Forest Preserve, was adjacent to the Great Bear Tract. It was a significant bequest and the inception of the Open Land Conservancy, whose historical roots are also tied to the Great Bear Tract group, and it further protected the natural and scenic roadway to Paoli.

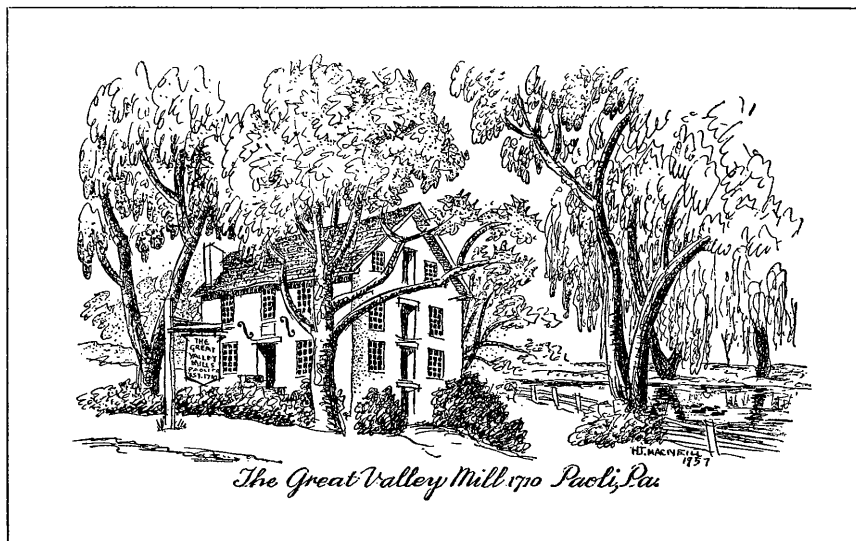


The original Great Bear Tract, Inc. was kept intact for about 30 years by the financial responsibility of its members, who had constant expenses to pay the taxes and the mortgage interest on its North Valley Road holdings. In order to lessen this expense, a small section at the very top of

the hill was sold, and the money was used to pay off the mortgage. On January 10, 1945, the members burned the mortgage, and the Great Bear Tract was then cleared of encumbrances.

With no apparent further need for the Great Bear Tract, Inc. as a land holding company, the corporation was dissolved and the land was subsequently donated to the Open Land Conservancy. While the group was active, it spent more than \$50,000 to preserve and beautify the rural road across the Valley from Paoli. The present residents of the Great Valley are indebted to that small but indomitable group of landowners.

However, prior to the dissolution of the corporation, its members and the descendants of the original members saw the need for a civic group with a broader-based agenda to protect the Valley and its natural beauty and rural charm. Hence, the Great Valley Association was formed. Active members responsible for this reactivation were Richard Haughton, John Maris, Utley Wedge, E. Burke Wilford, and C. Colkett Wilson, Jr. with Verl L. Elliot as president.



Subsequent presidents of the Great Valley Association (GVA) have been Edward H. TenBroeck, C. Colkett Wilson, Jr., H. Lea Hudson, Robert D. Scott, Mrs. Franklin B. Wildman, Charles H. Cox, Jr., W. Wilkinson Malloy, Harold A. Thomson, James Thorington II, William W. Malloy, Malcolm Sanders, Robert Helms, Macdonald Heston, Joseph Maxwell and Albert Charpentier. Many of these presidents were stewards of the organization for multiple terms. Residents of the Valley are indebted to them and to all those who have served to protect and maintain the quality of life in our Valley.

The Charter of the GVA...

The original members were pioneers in their conservation efforts in the Great Valley and set down for future residents a policy of constructive effort, constant vigilance and active participation in township affairs by individuals. The Great Valley Association has endeavored to continue this policy to balance the increased pressures of industrial and residential development in and around our area.

The Great Valley Association is devoted to the protection of this famous historical area, the preservation of its rural quality and its residential character, and to promote the safety and welfare of the residents of the Valley.

The Board Members of the Association meet regularly to hear reports of its committees and to take action on civic matters. Activities of Tredyffrin Township are monitored, with representatives attending the various Township meetings of the Board of Supervisors, the Planning Commission and the Zoning Hearing Board. The GVA is also involved with other organizations in the area, including the Valley Creek Coalition, Open Land Conservancy, Trout Unlimited and neighboring civic associations, all in a continuing effort to support its charter and the ongoing challenges facing the Valley.

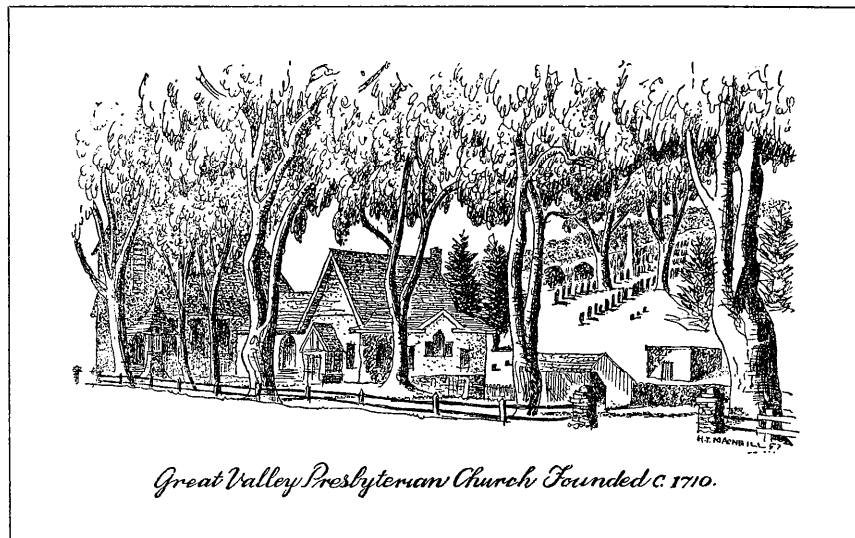


Activities of the GVA over the years...

Zoning has always been a matter of ongoing concern to the residents of the Valley, and in 1951 the Association succeeded in having the Great Valley classified as "R $\frac{1}{2}$." This zoning required 2.3 acres per residence (or 100,000 square feet) with 200-foot frontage, and additional requirements for setback, cubic footage of house, etc. The effort to prevent the down-zoning of its goals, as well as of its real estate, has been carried on in the face of mounting pressures from land developers. Zoning was later changed and is presently set at 80,000 square feet, which is less than 2 acres.

In 1954, the Association opposed the U.S. Defense Department's plan to build a "Nike" guided-missile base at Swedesford and Le Boutillier Roads, and on Diamond Rock Hill. The sites were built. Ten years later, they were abandoned. Also in 1954, the Association urged the Township to establish a Planning Commission. The Commission was created, and the Great Valley Association has worked with it closely through the years.

There were attempts to downgrade an area at the top of the hill of North Valley Road, which were successfully opposed by the Association. In 1956, the members passed a resolution expressing opposition to "the industrialization of any part of this historic countryside."



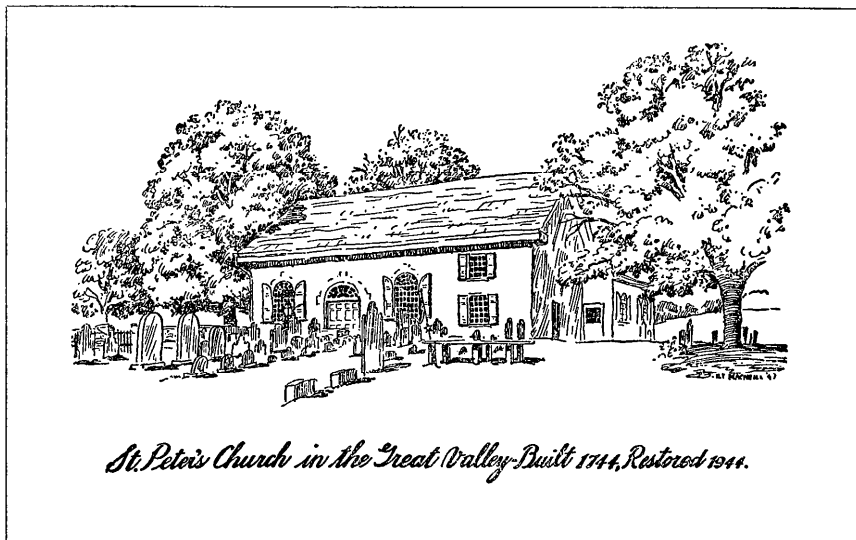
The Association and its members launched a strong and long protest against the planned routing of the PA Turnpike through the Valley in 1946. Any and all efforts to dissuade the Governor and State officials at that time failed. Then, in the late 1950's, the State Highway Department announced its plan to relocate Route 202 north of Paoli. Their proposal was to place the new route north of the former Reading Railroad, near the center of the Valley and in an area of home sites and existing residences.

The Association reluctantly accepted the fact that the highway would have to cross the length of the Valley somewhere. Letters, surveys and a great deal of time and money were expended in an effort to relocate the highway between the Reading and Pennsylvania Railroads. This area included PECO's power lines and was a more logical site than the proposed original route.

The effects of the Turnpike and Route 202, both of which have significantly fostered growth and development in the Valley, continue to present challenges and concerns regarding noise and water runoff issues for its residents.

One of the more interesting activities of the Great Valley Association was one that failed in 1959. The desire to keep their Valley green and attractive led the residents, with the support of the Association, into an

attempt to secede from Tredyffrin Township and form a separate borough. The courts, however, denied the petition.



Organized efforts to improve the beauty of the area continued, and the Conservation Committee acquired tree seedlings from the State in 1959. Plantings were done along the Pennsylvania Turnpike and other areas by the members of the Association.

Environmental concerns were also addressed by the Association, such as the sudden drying up of Valley Creek caused by the abandonment of a stone quarry in 1962. In 1963, the Association came to the aid of the Little Valley Creek after an accidental discharge of chemicals at a metal processing plant that was located in East Whiteland Township.

In 1970, a change was made in the Township's zoning plan, the Comprehensive Land Use Plan of 1970, which proposed a Unified Development District to accommodate the development of what is now known as "Chesterbrook." The Great Valley Association along with others presented opposition to that plan.

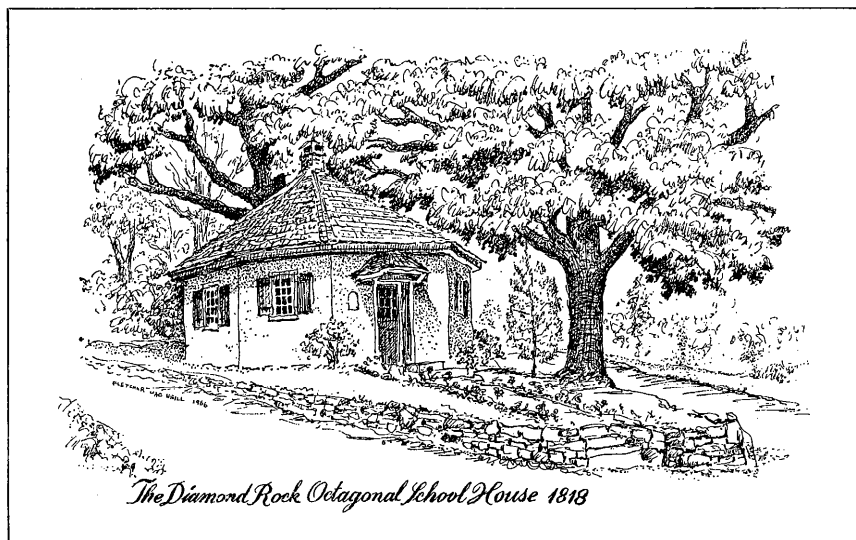
Immediately after the Plan's adoption, the developer, Richard Fox presented his plan for the area. Because the Township's authorities had unanimously adopted its Comprehensive Land Use Plan in spite of our strenuous opposition, the Association thought it prudent to work with Mr. Fox in order to modify the design and to make it as acceptable as possible

to our area. Mr. Fox agreed to our suggestions. As a result, the Association did not join in the prolonged opposition of Chesterbrook.

One of the organization's zoning accomplishments occurred with the Burroughs Corporation (now Unisys). Burroughs bought the William Hughes farm, some of which was in East Whiteland Township, and was zoned Limited Industrial. Along our Township line, we were zoned R $\frac{1}{2}$.

Several years after Burroughs built their plant in East Whiteland, they contacted the Great Valley Association to determine what could be done with the 34 acres on Swedesford Road that they were holding in Tredyffrin Township. After much amicable discussion, it was agreed that Burroughs would only use half of the land, providing the other half was deed-restricted to remain in the R $\frac{1}{2}$ zoning. That restriction was for 20 years, and at the end of that time, the land would assume the zoning of the area contiguous to it, excluding the Burroughs compound. This resulted in an 800-foot buffer west of Matthews Road, south of Swedesford Road.

The agreement with Burroughs was revised in 1973 to permit the building of an educational facility and then in 1990, to permanently dedicate some land as open space between their corporate complex and Pine View Drive, and to permit the construction of a bypass road to reduce traffic on neighborhood roads.



In 1981, the International Chemical Company made plans to construct an industrial park on an 80-acre tract, west of Church Road in Tredyffrin Township. The GVA successfully fought it, and the property was sold to Willard Rouse, a developer. After several years of negotiations with Mr. Rouse, a low-density office complex was agreed upon, that was separated from our residential area by a 300-foot buffer of natural open space. When preparation began for construction of a building, which was in violation of the covenant, the Association stepped in and Mr. Rouse agreed to stop the work and eliminated the building site.

In subsequent negotiations with the Great Valley Association, Liberty Property Trust (Rouse) continued to honor the covenant and agreed to plantings, berms and lighting to make their new office buildings less obtrusive to the neighboring communities in the Valley.

The Great Valley Association became involved in the Route 29 Task Force in 1983, as our area was being impacted by traffic from neighboring East Whiteland Township with the growth of the Great Valley Corporate Center. Improving Routes 29 and 202 was a mammoth project that required the Townships to work together via a joint municipal authority.

The Warner Quarry became an issue in 1983 and the Great Valley Coalition, of which the GVA was a member, spent 8+ years of intense efforts with the PA Department of Environmental Resources (DER) to limit the expansion of the quarry. This resulted in extensive restrictions and conditions being put into their permit to protect the historical site of St. Peter's Church and Valley Creek. Through the years, numerous development alternatives were defeated. This large site is now the Atwater Business Complex, built by developer, Trammell Crow.

The Association became intimately involved in another industrial development project, the Kilgore 200 acre site, which was to become the corporate campus of Vanguard. Negotiations with Kilgore, Vanguard, Unisys and the Township resulted in the successful rerouting of Cedar Hollow Road, with the creation of a "loop" road and the cul-de-sac of the original roadway as Catalpa Road. Vanguard further agreed to deed-restrict two parcels of land, one being on either side of Cedar Hollow Road, south of Route 202, and the other for a township park on the eastern parcel. The GVA also worked with Vanguard on the design and height of their

corporate tower and on keeping the new recreational playing field “low key” and without lights.

In other actions through the years, the Association recommended enactment of a Township Fire Prevention Code and revision of the Building Code; approved eventual expansion of Valley Forge Park; obtained a change in a Township Ordinance requiring fencing around all swimming pools; opposed the construction of high-rise apartments in the Township; sought air pollution regulations for quarries and plants adjacent to its boundaries; supported the closing of the Knickerbocker landfill; worked to reduce density of housing on Route 252 and Swedesford Road; petitioned to eliminate passing on North Valley Road between Swedesford and Yellow Springs Road; succeeded in reducing the traffic speed limits on these roads; and, encouraged the township to create a sound ordinance.

Traffic continues to be a major topic of concern to the Great Valley Association and its residents, in addition to newer issues of storm water runoff and noise abatement as a result of increased development and road expansion projects.

As a member of the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission’s Project Advisory Committee, the GVA is involved with the community oversight of the expansion of Route 202. One of the Traffic Committee’s accomplishments was the initiation of an ambient noise level study, which supports the need for sound walls. The committee continues to work on how traffic noise can be further mitigated in the Valley.

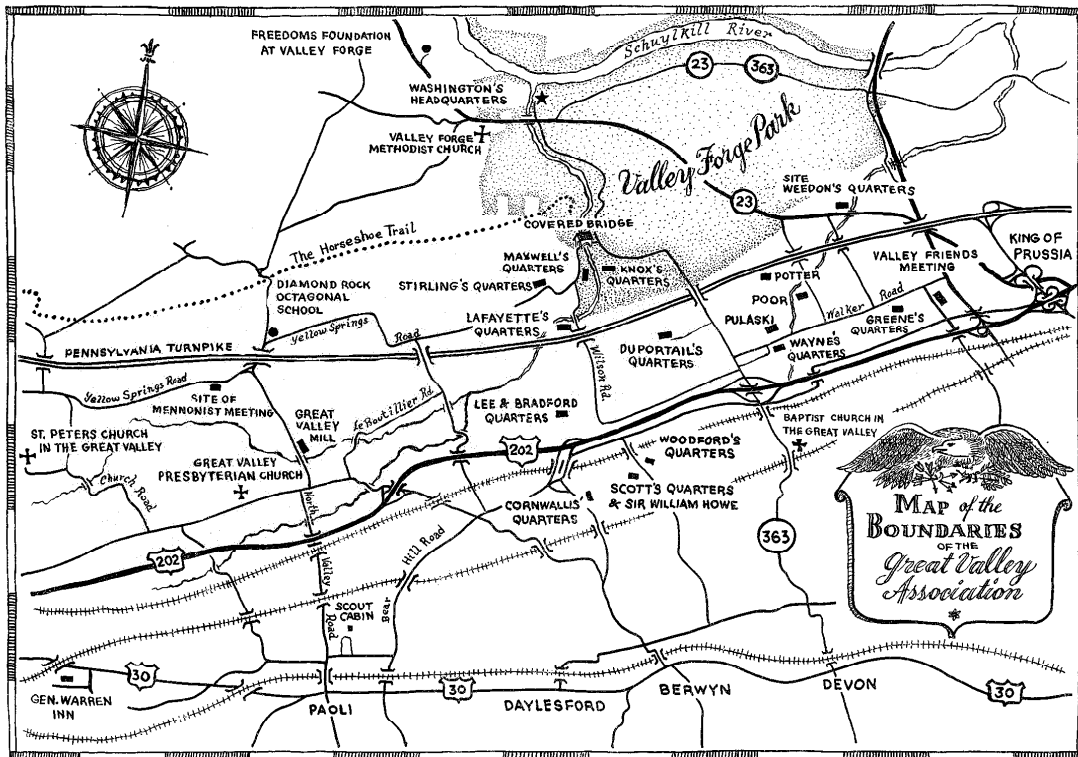
In addition, significant effort was expended by the Association relative to the traffic concerns of the intersection of North Valley and Swedesford Roads, a matter that remains an open issue. The Association was also involved in a citizens’ advisory committee with the PA Turnpike Commission and the Route 29 Slip Ramp Project.

The planned lane expansion of the PA Turnpike east to King of Prussia is presenting some major challenges of sound abatement and storm water runoff in the Valley. Active subcommittees of the GVA are empowering local concerned citizens to address these issues with the benefit of the Association’s larger influence of its membership.

In Summary...

Since the days of the Great Bear Tract, but more especially in recent years with the tendency toward more and denser development, the Great Valley Association has sought to balance rural living with the growth taking place around and within its borders. This is the responsibility of its present members, who are committed to helping preserve the quality of life for all the residents of the Valley.

Without losing the perspective that modern times demand, the Association intends to continue to maintain and even improve upon the precepts of those first few residents who, with wisdom and vision, pioneered the preservation and beautification of the Great Valley.



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